

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /059 R

DRAFTED BY EA/TB:GBROBERTS:LRR

APPROVED BY EA - ROBERT H. MILLER

EA/P - MR. SMITH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118305

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MILI, PFOR, SREF, CB, TH, US

SUBJECT:MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT: CAMBODIAN NAVAL HIJACKERS  
MUTINY AND FLEE TO THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 8993

1. THE MAY 20 WASHINGTON POST CARRIES A FRONT PAGE STORY ON THE MUTINY AND FLIGHT TO THAILAND OF THE CAMBODIAN GUNBOAT WHICH SUPPOSEDLY SEIZED THE MAYAGUEZ. THE STORY, WHOSE TEXT WE ARE SENDING YOU BY WIRELESS FILE, IS BASICALLY IN ACCORD WITH THE FACTS AS REPORTED BY THE EMBASSY (REFTEL) AND THE DAO.

2. WE EXPECT QUESTIONS STIMULATED BY THIS STORY AND HAVE PREPARED THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE FOR THE SPOKESMAN:

"QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORTS THAT A CAMBODIAN NAVAL GUNBOAT CLAIMING TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE MAYAGUEZ SEIZURE IS NOW IN THAI HANDS WITH THE CREW  
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REQUESTING ASYLUM?

"ANSWER: WE HAVE SEEN THE SAME REPORTS YOU HAVE. RIGHT NOW WE ARE TRYING TO ASCERTAIN THE FACTS. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR OUR CONCERN WAS TO SEEK

THE RELEASE OF THE CREW AND THE SHIP WHICH HAD BEEN ILLEGALLY SEIZED. WHEN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS BROUGHT NO POSITIVE RESULT, WE MOVED UNILATERALLY AND WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING THE RELEASE OF THE CREW AND SHIP. THE ROLE, IF ANY, PLAYED BY THIS CAMBODIAN NAVAL VESSEL IN THE SEIZURE OF THE MAYAGUEZ IS SOMETHING WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO ASCERTAIN THROUGH OUR EMBASSY IN BANGKOK.

"QUESTION: WHAT WILL BE OUR POSITION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE SHIP INASMUCH AS REPORTS SAY IT WAS GIVEN TO CAMBODIA BY THE U.S.?

"ANSWER: AS I HAVE SAID, UNTIL WE KNOW THE FACTS IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR ME TO COMMENT.

"QUESTION: SOME REPORTS ARE SAYING THAT THE CREW MAY HAVE BEEN ACTING ON ITS OWN RATHER THAN ON ORDERS FROM THE CAMBODIAN AUTHORITIES IN SEIZING THE MAYAGUEZ. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THIS?

"ANSWER: NONE OF THE FACTS IN OUR POSSESSION AT THIS TIME SUPPORT THAT VIEW. STATEMENTS BROADCAST FROM PHNOM PENH CLEARLY SHOW THAT THE NEW CAMBODIAN AUTHORITIES THERE ACKNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SHIP SEIZURE."

3. SEE MAY 20 WIRELESS FILE FOR DOD SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS. SUBJECT DID NOT ARISE AT STATE BRIEFING.

4. WE REALIZE THAT THE THAI HAVE AN INTEREST IN OBSCURING THIS ASPECT OF THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR, BUT YOU SHOULD DO WHAT YOU CAN TO PROVIDE US AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE ON THE MOVEMENTS AND MOTIVES OF THE E-311 IMMEDIATELY BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE SEIZURE. INGERSOLL

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